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THE EPOCH TIMES

CHINA INSIDER

Children play in front of a wall painted with a portrait of the late CCP leader Mao Zedong in Shanghai on May 19, 2006.

A CENTURY OF BRUTALITY

TENS OF MILLIONS KILLED AT THE HANDS OF THE
CCP SINCE ITS FOUNDING 100 YEARS AGO

See Page 2



Cheung Kim Hung (C), CEO and executive director of Next Digital Ltd., is escorted by police from the offices of the newspaper Apple Daily in Hong Kong on June 17, 2021. Hong Kong police arrested the chief editor and four executives of the pro-democracy newspaper, raiding its newsroom for a second time, in the latest blow to the outspoken tabloid.

PRESS FREEDOM

Pro-Democracy Paper in Hong Kong Forced to Close Under CCP's Widening Repression Campaign

EVA FU

Apple Daily, an independent pro-democracy tabloid in Hong Kong known for its critical stance on China's Communist Party, has weathered police raids and the jailing of its founder. But its 26th birthday might be its last.

Hong Kong's government, backed by Beijing, has taken aim at the newspaper. Last week, 500 police officers barged into the newsroom, seizing computers and files and arresting five of the publication's executives. Two directors now face charges of colluding with foreign forces, an ambiguous offense under the draconian national security law imposed by Beijing last year. Adding insult to injury, authorities froze the paper's assets as part of the investigation. With HK\$18 million (\$2.32 million) worth of assets on hold in local banks, it's now unable to pay its more than 800 staff members, and could be just days away from shutting its doors, the paper says.

The outlet's looming closure "marks the end of an era," Mary, a senior employee at Apple Daily using a pseudonym, told The Epoch Times. "The disappointing part is, we are shut down not because readers don't like us or that we lack good management. We have a lot of supporters and could have continued."

"It's saddening. It makes you wonder why Hong Kong has become like this."

The company marked the 26th year of its founding on June 20. The next day, a news anchor bid farewell as 36,000 people watched the last episode of its evening live broadcast. The company has ceased updating its online English site and the finance section of its Chinese-language site.

June 25 will be the paper's last working day if the government denies an appeal to unfreeze Apple Daily's funds. It might stop printing as early as June 26.

Readers have showered the outlet with support by sending food, drinks, and thank you cards, or buying their print copies, Mary said. Their encouragement is the driving force for her to keep going.

"I just feel that I need to be responsible for these readers. If there are people who still read your newspaper, you need to keep writing," she said.

Apple Daily was founded in Hong Kong in 1995 by Chinese dissident and textile tycoon Jimmy Lai, a leading opposition voice to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) who is currently jailed for taking part in a pro-democracy assembly in 2019.

The disappointing part is, we are shut down not because readers don't like us or that we lack good management. We have a lot of supporters and could have continued.

Mary (pseudonym), senior employee, Apple Daily

What happened to Apple Daily is proof of the harm the national security law can do to the Hong Kong press, Mary said. Since it took effect last July, the law has been used to arrest and charge an array of figures critical of the CCP in the city, crippling Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement.

"It's likely to send a chill to the news industry," she said. "Because the police and the government haven't clarified what reporting or opinion articles they have deemed as a violation of the national security law, everyone will now be very careful with what they write and report."

In support of the collusion charges, police said they have identified more than 30 Apple Daily articles, in both Chinese and English, since 2019 that called for foreign countries to impose sanctions on China or Hong Kong, but wouldn't reveal details because of ongoing legal proceedings—the first time that news articles have been cited as potentially violating the law.

It paints a bleak future for Hong Kong's media, Mary said.

"It will leave many journalists in fear because you don't know what is illegal."

Hong Kong's press freedom has plummeted in recent years, particularly after the national security law went into effect in July 2020. According to the press freedom index compiled by the Hong Kong Journal-

ists Association, the index for journalists hit a record low of 32.1 last year—down from 40.9 in 2018.

On June 22, the pro-Beijing Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam defended the police raid, calling Western criticisms an attempt to "beautify" actions that endanger national security. She ignored an Apple Daily reporter who shouted as she left: "You said the national security law only affected a small number of people. But more than 800 people from our company are now forced out of their jobs. Can you respond to this?"

The reporter was referencing statements by Hong Kong and Beijing authorities who, prior to the law's introduction, claimed that it would only target a "small number of criminals."

"The Chinese Communist Party is 100 percent forcing Apple Daily to close down, this has been clear long ago," said Chen Yonglin, a former Chinese diplomat who defected to Australia more than a decade ago.

Chen pointed to the slew of arrests of prominent protest organizers within the past year as evidence that the CCP has exerted its influence over Hong Kong.

"Hong Kong has long fallen," he told The Epoch Times. "Eventually, Hong Kong will become a Chinese city, and the word 'special administrative region' will [be] no more—it will be just Hong Kong city [of China]."



An employee collates sections of freshly printed copies of Apple Daily at its printing facility in Hong Kong on June 18, 2021.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The Show the Chinese Communist Party Doesn't Want You to See

CATHERINE YANG

There's little that scares the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) more than the growing popularity of traditional culture—embodied in the brilliant sights and sounds of Shen Yun Performing Arts.

It makes sense. New York-based Shen Yun's mission is to revive 5,000 years of Chinese civilization, an ancient culture centered around harmony between heaven, earth, and humankind—a culture said to be passed down from the divine. This is everything the CCP has been working to destroy since the Party's inception.

"Absolutely, this is blacklisted. This is the biggest threat to the Chinese Communist Party," said Jared Madsen, one of Shen Yun's emcees. "If people believe there's something beyond the Chinese Communist Party, they believe there's something higher ... that's a major threat to the Chinese Communist Party."

As such, the CCP has done everything from slashing Shen Yun's tour bus tires to hiring hordes of internet trolls to skew perception of the company on social media, to having Chinese consulates write letters to local officials saying that their letting Shen Yun perform in their areas would damage relations with China, to calling up theaters themselves (or through hired proxies) to demand Shen Yun be canceled. The interference goes back over a decade and has been well documented, and actually often backfires.

These measures may sound extreme, because Shen Yun is not even a political show. It's a performance of classical Chinese dance, of ethnic and folk dances from China's 50-some minority groups, of bel canto solos, and of an orchestra blending Eastern and Western traditions. And audiences step out of the theater aglow, uplifted by the performance, and happy to have learned the truth about the authentic culture of China, something little known in the West precisely because the Party has tried to erase it.

"Fundamentally, the Chinese Communist Party is an atheist regime. Shen Yun reflects 5,000 years of Chinese culture, and Chinese culture is rooted in divine thought—all different types of divine thought: Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism—that goes directly against the atheist principles of communism," Madsen said.

The CCP is afraid because Shen Yun shows China before communism.

What Is Traditional Culture?

One of the methods the CCP has used in trying to discredit Shen Yun is to create its own performing arts troupes, sending them all around the world.

"They created all these companies ... that they sent to the US. Now, have you heard of any of these?" Madsen said. "No, because they weren't very good. Why? Because no one wants to see communist propaganda."

In more recent years, the Party's method has evolved, and they talk often of promoting "traditional culture" and having major arts organizations emphasize "classical" dance in ways that turn out to be just lip service.

"When they do talk about traditional Chinese culture, they use it to try to promote communism. I mean here, we see right through it, like 'this is propaganda, and nobody wants to watch this,'" Madsen said.

It's worth understanding that all major organizations in China are state-run. Huang Peng, a violinist and vocalist with Shen Yun, explained how being an artist in China and in America has been like night and day.

Huang once had a prestigious career as a violinist. He studied the instrument under his father from childhood and successfully auditioned into a well-known philharmonic orchestra.



A performance by Shen Yun Performing Arts classical Chinese dancers.

This is the biggest threat to the Chinese Communist Party.

Jared Madsen, emcee, Shen Yun



(Top) Huang Peng, violinist for Shen Yun Performing Arts.

(Above) Jared Madsen, emcee for Shen Yun Performing Arts.

But then in 1999, the CCP began a persecutory campaign against Falun Gong, with official orders to ruin the livelihoods and reputations of those who would not give it up. Peng was one of an estimated 100 million people in China who followed this spiritual practice that teaches truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance. He was also one of several million who would not give up his faith, and he tried to tell his colleagues and those around him about the truth of Falun Gong: that it is good, teaches people to be kind, and that the CCP was circulating blatantly false and slanderous information about the practice.

Huang was telling his fellow musicians about Falun Gong one day when a supervisor reported him to the police, who then ransacked his home and detained him for 24 hours where they kept him awake. Meanwhile, they also illegally arrested his mother for no reason other than to coerce him into writing and signing a testimony not only stating he would give up his faith, but denigrating it as well.

Huang refused, and he was fired. His first thought was to seek work in another city, with a fresh start, but at the airport he learned that he had been blacklisted and was once again detained. Except this time, Huang was put in a "transformation class," shorthand for brainwashing, and he didn't see the outside world for the next two months.

Much has been documented about the CCP's brutal torture and organ harvesting of groups of its own citizens, like spiritual believers of Falun Gong. But Huang's torture was mental; he was put under 24-hour surveillance, made to watch brainwashing films, and threatened in myriad ways. Under the intense pressure, he signed the testimony. "After returning home, it felt like there was a knife in my heart," Huang said. He did what he most wanted not to do, and the mental persecution had stolen his integrity.

He spent the next few years constantly on the run. Not letting his regret weigh him down, he taught himself how to make and produce fliers that had information about the truth of Falun Gong, and taught others how to do the same, putting himself at risk for another illegal arrest. Huang had to give up his art, and it devastated him and his father both, but his faith was more important.

Then in 2008 he heard about Shen Yun, and in 2014 he was able to leave the country and successfully auditioned to be a part of the performing arts company he had looked up to.

"In mainland China, the state won't

allow people who practice Falun Gong to perform on stage. But here, we have freedom of belief. I think this is so important, as an artist," he said.

But why Shen Yun? "Shen Yun's mission is to revive China's 5,000 years of traditional culture," he said. "It is a divinely inspired culture and a divine message. And it is a message of kindness, which can move people's hearts."

The Truth Wins Out

Shen Yun was formed by a group of artists—some who left China, some who came by way of other parts of the world—who came together in New York in order to do what they couldn't in their home country.

And despite the CCP's long arm of influence, despite its making use of the entire state apparatus to discredit the company, Shen Yun has become a world-wide phenomenon.

"I remember there was one night, I believe in 2009, when we had three companies, and I got a phone call," Madsen said. "All three shows were sold out. That was the point. From that moment forward, we usually sold out every show."

Today, Shen Yun has seven companies that simultaneously tour the world, giving hundreds of performances in over 100 cities globally. It's the only performing arts group of its kind, dedicated not just to preserving but also to reviving traditional Chinese culture. Audience members often express intrigue, piqued by the many rave reviews, and want to see what the "world's premier classical Chinese dance company" looks like in action.

Audiences leave having all expectations filled and more, because Shen Yun is unique among performing arts companies as well, choreographing over a dozen new dances every season with a full-scale production that rivals top opera houses' most lavish pieces.

"The production value is incredibly high," Madsen said. "That alone, this is a show you can really get immersed in."

But while the one-of-a-kind costumes, and orchestra, and digital backdrops dazzle, he thinks there is something deeper that the audiences leave with.

"There's this constant human pursuit of something greater, something bigger, something better—not just that, something deeper, something higher. All of that. It all comes together," he said. "And our show really brings that out and brings that to life."

"It really goes beyond a cultural show. It's these deep values and deep principles," he said.

NTD contributed to this report.

The Epoch Times is a proud sponsor of Shen Yun Performing Arts. For more information please visit ShenYunPerformingArts.org

ANALYSIS

Scientists Obfuscated Source of COVID-19-Like Virus Stored at Wuhan Lab

Virus named RaTG13 was discovered in an abandoned mine in Mojiang, Yunnan, nearly 10 years ago

JEFF CARLSON & HANS MAHNCKE

Shi Zhengli, the director of the Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases of the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), is the common thread through which many key research projects and gain-of-function experiments on coronaviruses are connected. Her work shows a curious pattern of deception, tracing through her publications from 2013 to 2020, in which a key source for the coronavirus most closely related to COVID-19 was concealed.

In 2002, an outbreak of the novel coronavirus known as SARS resulted in the deaths of 774 people worldwide. Investigations quickly established that the virus spread from bats to civets and then on to people.

The SARS outbreak would prove to shape Shi's career, moving her from field research to work in level-2 biosafety labs before culminating in gain-of-function experiments in China's first and only level-4 lab, located in Wuhan.

Her search for the originating source of the SARS outbreak began in 2004, when she joined an international team of researchers to collect samples from bats in Southern China.

It is undeniable that Shi quietly kept the closest known relative to COVID-19 in her Wuhan lab for at least seven years and failed to address her discovery's true origins.

Shi's early research was captured in a 2005 article, in which she reported that "species of bats are a natural host of coronaviruses closely related to those responsible for the SARS outbreak."

Shi and her team would continue their search for the source of the 2002 outbreak for years, and the samples her team collected were sent to Wuhan for analysis and further experimentation.

On Dec. 12, 2007, Shi and her team published a paper in the *Journal of Virology* that showed how viruses could be manipulated to infect and attack human cells using an HIV-based pseudovirus. This experiment, funded by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, was the first indication that Shi's Wuhan laboratory was acquiring the technologies and skills required to manipulate viruses collected in the wild.

In June 2010, Shi co-authored a paper showing that her team had built on the 2007 experiments by manipulating additional bat virus specimens and testing their interactions with human SARS-CoV spike proteins. They found that the "al-



JOHANNES EISELE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Peter Daszak speaks to media upon arriving at the Wuhan Institute of Virology in Wuhan in China's central Hubei Province on Feb. 3, 2021.



HECTOR RETAMAL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Shi called this virus RaTG13, a name that hadn't previously appeared in any of her articles.

Chinese virologist Shi Zhengli inside the P4 laboratory in Wuhan, capital of China's Hubei Province, on Feb. 23, 2017.

Her work shows a curious pattern of deception, tracing through her publications from 2013 to 2020, in which a key source for the coronavirus most closely related to COVID-19 was concealed.

The P4 laboratory on the campus of the Wuhan Institute of Virology in Wuhan, in China's central Hubei Province, on May 27, 2020.

teration of several key residues either decreased or enhanced bat ACE2 receptor efficiency." The study was again funded by the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

In 2011 and 2012, Shi and her team conducted a "12-month longitudinal survey" of a colony of horseshoe bats "at a single location in Kunming city, Yunnan province, China." This single location was Shitou Cave.

While Shi and her team were conducting their survey at Shitou Cave, an unrelated group of six workers began clearing bat excrement from a copper mine shaft in Mojiang, Yunnan—approximately 200 miles away from Shi's group—according to *The Sunday Times*.

In April 2012, according to *The Wall Street Journal*, those six workers became seriously ill from a pneumonia-like disease that resulted in the deaths of three of the men. Notably, all of the

public reports state that the mine shaft was abandoned, but none of those same reports explain why the six miners were there to clean the shaft out.

There was no media mention of this strange, isolated outbreak, and as the *Sunday Times* notes, there "appears to have been a media blackout" surrounding the entire incident.

Shi and her team, fortuitously already in the region during this new outbreak, abruptly shifted both their focus and location and spent the next two years collecting samples from bats located in the mine at the Mojiang location.

A virus allegedly found in one of these samples was later revealed to be the closest known match to the virus that causes COVID-19.

The finding of this particular viral sample appears to have been akin to finding a needle in a haystack. Although

the Mojiang location turned up vast amounts of coronaviruses, only one of them resembled SARS and was reportedly found in a single fecal sample. Shi's team named the virus RaBtCoV/4991. Peter Daszak, the president of EcoHealth Alliance, confirmed the fortuitous finding to *The Sunday Times*.

"It was just one of the 16,000 bats we sampled. It was a faecal sample, we put it in a tube, put it in liquid nitrogen, took it back to the lab. We sequenced a short fragment," he said.

It isn't known whether Daszak, who used funding from the National Institutes of Health to provide the WIV with grants to research bat coronaviruses, was present at the Mojiang mine site, but he's a co-author of a paper describing the group's findings.

Shi's Conflicting Scientific Articles

The more complete tale unfolds in an examination of five articles in Western science journals that Shi and her research collaborators published between 2013 and 2020.

An Oct. 30, 2013, paper written by Shi and Daszak highlighted the first-ever "isolation and characterization of a bat SARS-like coronavirus that uses the ACE2 receptor."

Their paper noted that their "results provide the strongest evidence to date that Chinese horseshoe bats are natural reservoirs of SARS-CoV, and that intermediate hosts may not be necessary for direct human infection by some bat SL-CoVs."

In other words, their 2013 paper specifically noted the possibility of direct transmission from bats to humans.

The paper also referred to the "first recorded isolation" of a live SARS-like coronavirus known as WIV1—apparently shorthand for Wuhan Institute of Virology 1. The virus was isolated from fecal samples taken from the horseshoe bats.

By this time, Shi had spent almost two years collecting bat samples from the Mojiang mine. Notably, her scientific papers make no mention of the mine, of the 2012 outbreak, or of the miners or their deaths.

As their 2013 paper notes, the group claimed that all of their results came from a "single location in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China"—the location of Shitou Cave.



HECTOR RETAMAL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

More specifically, Shi's 2013 paper, along with a follow-up paper in November 2015, appeared to intentionally conceal her years-long work at the Mojiang mine, as well as the crucial fact that the mine—not the bat cave in Kunming—was the true source for what would become known as the closest relative to the virus that causes COVID-19.

The 2015 article written by Shi, along with Ralph Baric of the University of North Carolina and others, revisited the presence of the virus in horseshoe bats. Notably, the article doesn't directly specify the location from which the virus was sourced, but instead uses a footnote to reference the 2013 article, which claimed that the source came from a "single location in Kunming"—the location of Shitou Cave.

The paper notes that "a SARS-like cluster of circulating bat coronaviruses shows potential for human emergence." The researchers observed that some of the viruses that they found "replicate efficiently in primary human airway cells." The researchers stated that their work "suggests a potential risk of SARS-CoV re-emergence from viruses currently circulating in bat populations."

But again, just like her 2013 article, no reference to the Mojiang mine as the actual source was made.

However, within less than three months, in a follow-up to the November 2015 paper, Shi and her team acknowledged in a February 2016 article that they had "conducted a surveillance of coronaviruses in bats in an abandoned mineshaft in Mojiang County, Yunnan Province, China, from 2012–2013."

In this same article, Shi admitted that she obtained a virus called RaBtCoV/4991 from 276 bat fecal probes that "were sampled in a mineshaft in Mojiang." As we now know, the RaBtCoV/4991 virus has been shown to be the closest known match to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Shi renamed this same virus as RaTG13 in early February 2020—just as the COVID-19 pandemic had begun to emerge. A database of bat viruses published by the Chinese Academy of Sciences—the parent body of the WIV—confirms that the RaBtCoV/4991 virus was "discovered on July 24, 2013, as part of a collection of coronaviruses that were described in the 2016 paper on the abandoned mine," *The Times* reported.

The Chinese database specifically references Shi's Feb. 18, 2016, paper, which makes note of the mineshaft in Mojiang, along with the discovery of multiple coronaviruses—including the new SARS-like strain—but makes no mention of the 2012 respiratory outbreak, nor of the resulting deaths of the miners.

In 2017, Shi and her team would once again shift focus away from the Mojiang mine and back to Shitou Cave, claiming: "We have carried out a five-year longitudinal surveillance (April 2011 to October 2015) on SARSr-CoVs in bats from a single habitat in proximity to Kunming city, Yunnan Province, China"—the region where Shitou Cave is located.

For reasons yet unknown, any mention of the Mojiang mine, where Shi and her team spent two years collecting bat samples culminating in the discovery of the closest known relative to COVID-19, was once again conspicuously omitted.

One of Shi's co-authors on the 2013 and 2017 articles, Linfa Wang, has since come to prominence as a vocal propo-

nent of the natural origins theory pertaining to the virus. Wang, a member of the World Health Organization's Emergency Response Team for the COVID-19 outbreak, discussed the issue of funding with *National Geographic* in June 2020, noting that when it comes to infectious diseases, "people never realize there's a huge return."

"When we have prevented small outbreaks, people don't care. It doesn't get media attention," he said.

Wang, who has been collaborating with Shi since at least 2005, finished by asking a question that called to mind the 2012 outbreak at the Mojiang mine: "In Wuhan, if three people died and it was controlled, would we know it? No. This is happening all the time. It's just in remote villages where people die. You bury them and end of the story, right?"

Of the many articles written regarding their multiyear work, only the 2016 piece acknowledges the existence of the Mojiang mine. And, again, nowhere does Shi or her team make any mention of the actual outbreak and the deaths of three of the six infected miners.

Shi's years-long possession of the virus found in the Mojiang mine was suddenly highlighted on Feb. 3, 2020, when Shi and her collaborators published a new article stating that scientists at the Wuhan lab had a close match to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Shi called this virus RaTG13, a name that hadn't previously appeared in any of her articles. The 2020 article was notably vague about the origins of this new virus, simply stating that it "was previously detected in *Rhinolophus* affinis from Yunnan province."

As independent researchers later found out by comparing genome sequences from archived Chinese databases, the virus that Shi referenced in 2020 was actually RaBtCoV/4991, the virus that was taken from the Mojiang mine back in 2012 and written about in 2016.

In November 2020, as more facts were uncovered in relation to the virus's origins, Shi suddenly added an addendum to her February 2020 article, finally admitting that COVID-19's closest known relative had come from the Mojiang mine. However, Shi referred to the Mojiang mine as a "mine-cave" and "cave," once again blurring the lines between the Mojiang mine and the Shitou Cave, located 200 miles apart.

In this addendum, Shi acknowledged that she had renamed the virus from RaBtCoV/4991 to RaTG13, supposedly in order to "reflect the bat species." However, both the previous designation and the new designation carry the letters "RA," which stand for *Rhinolophus* affinis, the Latin term for intermediate horseshoe bats.

Notably, Shi's 2020 article also alleged that the pandemic had "started from a local seafood market." That false claim, which has been disproven, wasn't addressed in Shi's addendum.

Although it isn't yet known precisely why Shi obscured the true origins of RaBtCoV/4991 and obfuscated her 2013 discovery, it's undeniable that Shi quietly kept the closest known relative to COVID-19 in her Wuhan lab for at least seven years and failed to address her discovery's true origins.

Jeff Carlson and Hans Mahncke are co-hosts of the program "Truth Over News" on EPOCH TV.



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